



## Office of the President

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August 31, 2006

The Honorable Tom Coburn, M.D.  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management  
Attn. Anna Shopen  
439 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20510-3604

Dear Senator Coburn:

Thank you for your inquiry concerning federal appropriations directed to New Mexico State University (NMSU) in recent years. We are very proud of the work we have been able to accomplish with federal funding. In fact, recent appropriations supported a collaboration between the Army Research Laboratory and NMSU, leading to development of jamming technology deployed against improvised explosive devices (IEDS) in Iraq (saving untold lives of Americans serving there) and toward the complex systems technology for a digital battlefield in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. NMSU has also received support for research in agriculture-related efforts to conserve water and energy, which is a major issue in the Southwest.

Historically, Congress has set priorities for research, outreach and services that are salient to the nation's needs. This has allowed universities to set their objectives and work collaboratively with other funding agencies, private organizations and educational institutions to meet these needs. There are many cases where this has been especially important because of the cyclical nature of executive administrations, leaving Congress to effect a constant long-term research and educational focus. We respect the ability of our congressional representatives to identify and address national priorities. The United States Government and the Congress have taken a leading role in setting priorities in the past, and, as a result, this country is a technological leader in the world. However, there has not been a more critical time than now for the Senate to guide the universities in maintaining America's technical edge in the global market, national security, independence and self sufficiency. We thank you, your office, and the United States Congress for this vision and commitment.

University research has given birth to some of the most revolutionizing technologies in the recent past including semiconductors, lasers, and, more recently, nanotechnology (to name a few). NMSU's Congressional earmarks are focused on making a significant impact in the region and across the nation. This is based on our expertise and the most critical strategic goals of the nation. We seek partners who bring further depth and breadth to our own expertise in the area. We measure the success of a program through:

1. Scientific contribution to society;
2. Public service to the community;
3. Involvement and training of students to build leaders for tomorrow; and
4. Strategic positioning to address a national challenge.

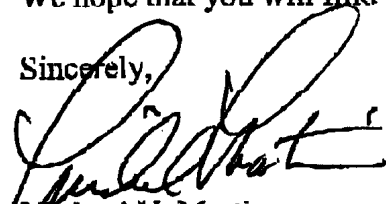
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The success of our programs often results in follow-up competitive funding, enhanced interdisciplinary partnerships and improved outreach and training. The outcomes from these research and development activities are disseminated through peer-reviewed publications, conference papers, and invited talks, and find their way into commercial industry and even onto the battlefield. There was a time when industry itself set up large research institutes that functioned as conduits for funding that supported basic research activities aligned with national and corporate strategic goals, but that is no longer the case. Government funding to universities has filled this critical gap.

We believe that congressional earmarks help to "level the playing field" by supporting Hispanic Serving Institutions such as ours in serving the interests of the state and the nation while educating a population of students that is largely underrepresented and often the first generation of their families to attend college. This funding has allowed aspiring institutions to take up issues of relevance that serve the public good and to develop the professional workforce of the future. In sum, congressional funding supports our involvement in developing the technologists and workers of tomorrow while giving us the visibility and confidence to take greater strides today.

We hope that you will find our assessment useful.

Sincerely,



Michael V. Martin  
President